

Next week! "The Winged Whale: or, the Water Demon." By Albert W Aiken, author of "The Wolf Demon."

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"Ay, the bride of death!" she said, striking full at his heart, where her father's hunting-knife shivered to atoms.

THE AVENGING ANGELS;

OR

The Bandit Brothers of the Scioto.

A BORDER AND INDIAN TALE.

By the Author of "The Silent Hunter," "Queen of the Woods," etc.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FOREST HOME.

AGAIN we shift the scene, this time to another portion of the land where our narrative takes place: to a spot where the oak, the beech, and the hickory still throw their giant and knotty arms in wild luxuriance, and where their bark was yet unscarred by the ax of the ruthless emigrant, and where yet they were grand in their pristine glory.

We approach a farm lying imbedded in a deep, dark, and impenetrable forest. On a distant eminence, some three hundred yards from the line of the surrounding forest, stands the homestead, or farm-house, neatly environed by a post and rail fence, inclosing some three acres of land, upon which the native growth of poplar, oak, and beech has been allowed to remain.

It was a double log-hut, of two rooms, each twenty feet square, with an open passage of the same dimensions between, all under one roof, and composed of huge logs neatly squared and hewn, with the interstices daubed with mud.

It was two stories in height, while in the rear, removed some twenty feet from the main building, was the kitchen.

The room to the left was lit up both by fire and candles, and within this we will enter. It is decorated with many trophies of the chase and rifle, interspersed with numerous' nets, fishing-poles, hunting-horns, and other instruments for the destruction and taking of game.

In a large arm-chair beside the fire sat a man of imposing exterior and stalwart frame. His form was athletic, almost gigantic—just six feet two; with a broad, full, and powerful bust, a majestic face, and dark hair tinged with gray, cut short, and curling over a massive brow.

On a stool close to his feet sat a girl, who had just passed her sixteenth year, and was now a blushing flower in her seventeenth spring.

Her face, bright and happy with health, adorned and set off by a laughing blue eye, and glowing with a soft, transparent, flushing tinge that no art could imitate, was shaded and beautified by long, light auburn hair, curling and sweeping without ornament around her lovely throat.

Her form was neither too delicate nor too robust, neither too fragile nor too stout, but just the proper medium.

Rather taller than the average of women, she was ever most graceful and active, and walked with the quick springy tread of a young fawn, with her head proudly erect, and her bright blue eyes dancing merrily around, as if in search of enjoyment.

Neat a window, reading, is an older girl. She, however, is not long past eighteen. She is tall, slim, and graceful; her light-brown hair, long and silky, braided round a head of most classic beauty; her forehead, high and projecting, gives assurance of great intellect, while her lips and brow denote firmness and energy; her eye is neither black nor blue, nor can it be called gray, but is rather a shade between black and dark gray, that is commonly called nut-brown hazel; her nose is aquiline, with long nostril full and expansive.

She is all in all a splendid beauty.

Reclining on a couch is a middle-aged lady, whom, at a glance, any one can recognize as the mother of the two young ladies.

And yet these are some of the pioneers who have gone forth to cultivate and clear a new and unknown district.

"I wish the boys were in," said the mother; "this is no time to be out."

"They have been caught in the storm," replied the father, "and have taken shelter in some cavern, or other cache."

Again silence, the mother deeply sighing, as she thought of other days.

The gentleman who occupied the residence which we have endeavoured to describe, was one who had enjoyed great wealth and distinction in the inhabited part of the colonies, and whom his fellow-citizens were proud to see taking a high post in their midst.

He was one of those who, however, always looked forward to an ultimate return to the land of his birth; and so, though he amassed large possessions in lands and houses in America, England held the greater part of his wealth.

But as he grew older other feelings influenced him. He became attached to the land of his adoption; his habits became fixed; hunting and fishing, on a scale not practicable in an old country, became his passion; and he determined to extend his own property in America, while giving his sons, as they grew up, the means of acquiring homes for themselves.

But he had transmitted most of his funds

to England, even mortgaging his colonial estates to increase his store.

And now all this must be got back.

How was it to be done?—his wife and children revolting against the idea of his fitting it himself.

He looked around him. There was one friend—a Mr. Edwards, an eminent lawyer, also a magistrate, whose orphan nephew was affianced to his own daughter Ella. Him he consulted. Without a moment's hesitation he offered to go himself, having long desired to do so.

The judge pressed his hands, thanked him cordially, and gave him every necessary power to act for him.

He started, and from that day—now two years—nothing had been heard of him.

The judge could find no trace of him. He had reached England, gone to Paris, returned to London, and then all trace of him was lost.

The judge was ruined.

Without a word he gave up his possessions to the mortgagees, collected such household goods around him as remained to him, and started secretly and by night for a new land where he might never again see the face and deceitful face of man.

And young Roland Edwards, the old lawyer's nephew, Judge Mason spurned from his door, with scorn and contumely.

With two married laborers and the daughter of one, he managed soon to get a home around him, and though he could not hope to regain his former station, he would, if years were spared him, be able to leave his children a fine estate in a land which literally flowed with milk and honey—the Blue Lick region of Kentucky.

It was the evening after the storm when we introduce our new characters. They were seated after supper, talking as usual, each following the bent of his own fancy.

The labors of the day were done.

Ettie, taking her straw hat, started out, as for a walk.

"Be careful, little one," said her admiring father, "or we shall have some red-skin taking you away to his wigwam."

"I should like to see him," said Ettie, laughing. "I will but run and help Martha for half an hour, and then come back."

And she went out into the silent night, tripping like a fairy under the pine-wood forest.

About ten minutes later, Mrs. Mason, rising, looked forth upon the lawn-like meadow before the house.

A low shriek escaped her lips.

Husband and child were in an instant by her side, and looking in the direction to which she pointed.

Five tall figures, in Indian costume, were advancing gun in hand, creeping under the trees, as if to conceal their persons.

"Heaven protect us!" cried the judge, solemnly. "the bloody heathen are upon us!"

The judge put up the heavy bar.

The log-house to which this family had transferred themselves after their departure from the colony, was built with due regard to security and strength. At no great distance from the house had been a knoll covered by pines fourteen or fifteen inches in diameter and a hundred feet high; these had been felled, cut into lengths of between twenty or thirty feet, notched at the ends, and rolled alternately on each other, so as to inclose an area that was one-third longer than it was wide.

The windows were merely transverse bars, with heavy oaken shutters.

The roof was strongly made of poles, over which they had laid the bark of the hemlock.

The door was made of riven logs, that were pinned together with cross-pieces, with the usual wooden hinges.

"A thievish-looking gang, truly," said the judge, thoughtfully; "but we can hold out until the boys return. Where is Ettie?"

Mother and daughter exchanged a terrified glance.

"Come down to the Blue Spring to see Martha," faltered Ella.

"God help her!" said the judge, fervently. "I will go up and hold parley with these scoundrels. Open to no one, save when I tell you."

And taking a brace of pistols and a heavy rifle he went up-stairs. Scarcely was his back turned when by a simultaneous impulse the mother and daughter armed themselves.

The history of border heroism played a noble and glorious part.

The lights had been blown out, and having thus prepared themselves, the women sat down.

Meanwhile the judge had ascended to his room, whence, through a narrow loop-hole, he looked upon the scene below. All was stillness and peace. The trees waved gently: under the influence of the night air the moon and starlit sky illuminated the peaceful and pleasant landscape, for such the clearing was, with its dark fringe of forest in the rear.

The trees which had been left standing were, with the exception of one or two small ones, at some distance from the house, as in that wilderness an attack was hourly to be expected. Right in front of the judge's window was a large oak, and beneath this the five men were clearly collected, though their forms were but shadowy in the gloom.

Presently, however, one of the party, whose stature appeared gigantic through the thin mist which rose from the fertile earth, approached the house with the jaunty air of an honest trapper or hunter, and knocked at the door.

"House, there!"

"What seek you?" replied the deep voice of the judge. "Who and what are you?"

"A poor hunter, having lost his way in the woods, craves hospitality for the night."

"Why do your companions skulk under

yonder tree? Begone, villain, lest I send a bullet through your brain. White Indians, away! I give shelter to no such ruffians," cried the angry father.

"I say, old fellow," replied the man, after taking shelter within the covered court, "none of your tricks upon travelers. If we are five, the more the merrier. I thought so many all at once might scare you, so came on alone. Now open, for we can't stop here all night."

"Go whence you came. I open no door of mine to-night," was the decisive reply, and the judge closed the shutter of the loophole.

"Won't you?" muttered the ruffian, who then gave a shrill whistle, that brought his companions whooping across the greenward like a party of demons hounding their prey.

"Well!" said Mo, in a low voice, that smote like an icicle on the old man's heart. "I know them now," he said to himself, with a shudder, "and Heaven in its infinite mercy spare me and mine! My poor Ettie!" he added, with a convulsive shudder.

He listened again. The men had retired within the covered yard, which, having its back to the north, was also boarded up in the rear, and formed indeed a summer room for meals and for lounging in fine weather.

The judge moved across his room, opened the door of an inner one, containing two beds, and crossed it.

A small room looked out on the forest in the rear. As he put his head through, a soft, musical voice, singing in a low tone, as if half scared by the gloom, was heard upon the skirt of the forest, not twenty yards from the log.

A tremendous hammering at the front door at the same instant made her pause.

"Hist! Ettie, darling," said the agonized parent.

"Father?"

"Hist! speak low! Go back, take Martha, retire to the Red Tree Glen, and there remain hidden. Tell Robert and John we are attacked by white Indians. God bless you—go!"

And the judge, having seen that his darling had implicitly obeyed him, retired from that window and went to his own.

"If you do not leave my door, I will fire upon you," he said, sternly.

"Fire away," was the brutal reply; "two can play at that game."

Without hesitation he fired at the nearest ruffian, who dropped his rifle with a hideous yell. The rest disappeared round the corner, dragging the wounded man with them.

The judge closed the bars of his loophole and went down-stairs, where he found his brave wife and daughter, pale but resolute.

A faint smile crossed his lips, as he saw them armed and accoutered.

"We can hold out until morning, papa," said Ella, with a proud smile; "then Horace and James will be here, I know."

"My darling, I will not deceive you. If the villains were Indians we might, as at the first repulse, they would retire or wait for reinforcements; but these are five ruffians, notorious horse-thieves, and murderers. We must fight to the last gasp."

"But would they not take a bribe?" cried Mrs. Mason. "Could you not buy the wretches off?"

"Perhaps," murmured the judge, scarcely knowing that he spoke.

"Then, why not parley? Give them all we have."

"Including our daughters?" hissed the old man in his wife's ears. "These men I know. Their villainies are beyond description. No, old wife—partner of my bosom—unless Providence sends us aid this night, we must die."

Mrs. Mason looked at him with a bewilder air, and then all her mother's feelings rushed to her heart.

With a dark and menacing frown she clutched her gun. She felt the courage of a lioness.

"But Ettie!" she gasped, after a moment.

"Safe, I send her to a safe hiding-place," replied the father. "Be ready to act as I tell you; and now," he whispered to his wife, "give her such a faint hint as a maiden may hear, and then to your posts."

As he spoke the stalwart old man drew softly a small slide which masked an oblique loophole, and peered into the covered yard. The men had gone, but a truck had gone with them.

He turned round with a sigh, as if fully aware of the accumulated horrors he had to expect that night; as he did so, his eyes fell upon his eldest daughter. She was deadly pale, but stood with flashing eyes and haughty mien gazing at some imaginary intruder. Then, through her white lips hissed: "Death before dishonor!"

"The villains would fire the log," he said, with as much calmness as possible, "but we will thwart them. When you hear the wretches without and when I fire, discharge your rifles—and God defend the right."

CHAPTER V.

THE BANDIT'S BRIDE.

WHEN the judge ascended to his post and looked out upon the night, all was still. The men who had so rudely demanded his hospitality were nowhere to be seen, and had he known them for less than the wretches they were, he might have hoped to have been quit of them. But Judge Mason entertained no such delusion. He knew that though for a moment out of sight, they were at their fiendish work—work which they understood but too well.

A dozen fearful murders, accompanied by every circumstance characteristic of fiends, proved their true character.

For some time, however, the weary sen-

try, for he was weary with fearful thoughts, saw nothing, until hope began almost to visit his heart. Meanwhile a wondrous change had come over the scene. For some time the judge had remarked a wild look in the sky, had noticed the swift flying clouds and was assured that one of those storms which come and go with such wondrous rapidity was at hand.

He was right.

In a few minutes it burst with tremendous fury upon the wild wilderness; the sky grew black, a lurid glow hung about the edge of the clouds, whose ragged outlines swept in elements they along, and then a flash, a burst of thunder, proclaimed that Heaven's artillery was at work.

Then all again was still. The squall, or perhaps the tail-end of a great storm, had passed over.

The judge rubbed his eyes as if he had been dreaming, for directly beneath him were the five ruffians, casting down their burdens of wood, boughs, leaves, and other combustibles at the door, forming at once a dangerous heap.

The use of the truck was now revealed. It was loaded with split logs of pine, which lay for the family use on a pile at no great distance from the house.

The judge frowned darkly. He knew that the fire about to be made would be a formidable one, but "perhaps" as formidable to his enemies as to himself, for the smoke and blaze might bring assistance when least expected.

The door was strong, and the logs of the hut were so compact that the fire would be a long time doing its hellish work.

But now the pile is ready, and the men, with reckless laughter, prepare the instruments which are to set it in a blaze. They stand in a kind of circular group, and soon, with frantic shouts, each of the ruffians waves a blazing pine-torch on high, and rushes to his work.

Ping! and one falls prostrate on the earth.

Ping! ping! and two others bite the dust.

The torches lie on the ground smoldering, while the abashed ruffians, assisting their wounded comrades to rise, bear them off to a distance, and all again is still.

This silence lasted about ten minutes, when the silence of the night was broken by the rapid discharge of rifles against the house.

The judge, who was anxiously watching, narrowly escaped, as he bolted through the loop-hole and frame.

The judge descended once more to the welfare of his beloved charges, whom he found calm, pale, and resolute. The volley of rifles had startled them, but when they heard the bullets sink in the wood their anxiety ceased.

"Was any one hit?" asked Mrs. Mason.

"Every bullet struck its mark. They have retreated with their wounded," replied the judge.

The women shuddered at the thought of having shed human blood, but showed no signs of failing courage. On the contrary, they seemed to clutch their arms with renewed energy, now they knew that their fate was partly in their own hands.

"Hist!" said the judge, moving quickly to the slide on the side of the inclosed yard. He was not quick enough, though he thought he saw a shadow on the ground as of a man crawling.

He ascended once more to his bedroom, which, as in most houses of a similar character—intended for defense as well as shelter—projected over the lower story. A chink wide enough for observation ran about two feet along the floor.

Judge Mason now saw one of the ruffians take a torch and cast it among the dry leaves. In an instant the smaller twigs ignited, the flame darted from branch to branch, until a large portion of the pile was crackling and snapping in a bright blaze.

The bandit then fled again unharmed, a scurried.

The flames mounted, and a forked stream shot up through the chink, sucked up by the draught; the whole room was illuminated, and yet the judge moved not.

At last, however, he rolled the large keg of water, always full for use, to the spot, and with a hearty blow of his iron heel, knocked out the top.

A loud hiss, a choking rush of smoke and steam, and the fiery blaze below had vanished.

A yell of rage from the balked assailants proclaimed their fury at the old man's tactics. It was quite evident that, unless they acted with redoubled energy, the gallant father would hold out until morning, when help might arrive, and make the match more even.

Presently a fearful thought almost paralyzed the energies of the old man. If Etie had escaped and joined Martha, why had his laborers—whom he knew to be brave and experienced backwoodsmen—why had they not come to the rescue? With their assistance he would have saluted forth to the Indians searching for them.

This was Nick's theory of what he saw, although at the same time, he saw that it was no very brilliant strategy, and the chances of its success were quite remote; but it had its danger, nevertheless, and he turned back to warn his companions.

The natural course that now suggested itself was for the party to leave the path altogether, and, pursuing a course at right angles to it, make directly for the ridge over which they were so desirous of passing.

This was done with only a moment's delay, necessary for a complete understanding of the movement. The Indians seemed still on every side of them, and too much caution could not be exercised in every movement made. The keenness of Calamity was invaluable, and he had already been the means of saving them from capture more than once.

With his remarkable sagacity, Nick now began to comprehend what all this meant. The Blackfeet were taking pains to keep the fire burning, expecting that it would perhaps catch the eye of the fugitives wandering in the vicinity. They would apt naturally to drift into the path, and seeing the fire would make a *détour* to avoid it.

On each side of the fire, and at some distance in the wood, there were doubtless Indian sentinels on the alert to discover, and instantly make known their whereabouts to the Indians searching for them.

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"We're in a condemned difficulty yet," remarked Nick, as they stepped out of the path; "it's hard traveling over these rocks, and if you ain't blamed careful the varmint'll hear you, too."

"You mustn't go too fast," admonished Miona; "two or three times I came near losing you."

"I'll take care of that," was the reply; "you are good for a long tramp."

"I am good for any exertion that will get us out of this dangerous place," she answered; "it seems that we are making no progress at all."

"We ain't much, sartin. How do you stand it, Ned? Are you 'bout ready to give up?"

"I will notify you, Nick, when I need rest," laughed Ned. "I am somewhat tired, but my only trouble is drowsiness. You know I haven't slept for two nights, and if I stand still for ten minutes, I find my eyes getting heavy."

"You must fight it off, for we ain't going to have any time to sleep to-night. Wait till we git where there's a chance, and you may sleep for a week. Come ahead now, and mind what I said 'bout making a noise; it seems to me that's a hundred of the varmints skulking all 'round us."

Again they moved forward, taking a route that was much more difficult to follow than the other. Here and there the woods were so full of dense undergrowth that they were forced to pick their way with great carelessness, or else to change their course entirely; then again huge rocks interposed, causing the same difficulty; but the trapper still maintained his general direction, advancing

every drop of water in the house, they could not extinguish the flames, the judge proceeded to barricade the door to about five feet high with every movable article of furniture in the place, resolved to allow no chance to escape him.

"Bring up water," said the old man; "ever drop you can."

At this moment a lurid, forked stream of fire rose, almost like a rocket from the pile, causing it to burn with intense brightness. A gourd, half-full of brandy, had cracked in the flames, and spread itself abroad on the huge bonfire.

Having discovered that, after expending

every drop of water in the house, they could not extinguish the flames, the judge proceeded to barricade the door to about five feet high with every movable article of furniture in the place, resolved to allow no chance to escape him.

"The door is of dry and seasoned wood," he said, "and will soon burn; the logs will

hold longer. When the villains have destroyed that barrier, we will stand by this barricade to the death."

"To the death!" said Ella, with the enthusiasm of a martyr.

"To the death!" repeated Mrs. Mason, embracing her family.

At the end of the room was a kind of ladder, where the old man directed his wife to retreat to, while Ella he placed in the dark shadow of the fireplace. He posted himself at the foot of the stairs. It was time.

The door of riven oak was smoldering through, and soon the smoke and flames burst in in volumes, driving them from their various posts. They would have been choked, but the smoke escaped rapidly through the chinks into the bedrooms above.

Each of the defenders of that impregnable home had two guns. Mrs. Mason had a rifle and light fowling-piece; Ella had two rifles; her father a heavy rifle and one carbine, besides pistols. There was ample ammunition, of course, as no borderman ever was unsupplied with that valuable commodity which, in the vast solitudes of prairie and forest, his chief dependence.

The crackling of the serpent-like flames, the roaring of the bonfire without, the spitting and sputtering of the damp wood, were all that now broke the silence, when a heavy blow resounded against the door and it flew into splinters, revealing to the inmates of the house a cavernous mouth of fire.

They could all clearly see the hideous blackened faces of the ruffians, peering maliciously across the glowing embers.

"Come out, you judge of—!" roared the infuriated elder brother; "come forth we smoke you out!"

No answer.

"By jingo!" said one, "what's up? There's no back door, sure-ty. But no, I've crawled all round, and there ain't. The folks is gone up-stairs. Hurrah, boys! The castle's all our own!"

And dashing the fast-sinking fire down with their heavy hoots, they rushed at the frail barricade.

Three sheets of flame, three reports, and the villains, again wounded, held back.

"Give them no time to load!" roared Mo, dashing at the defenses; "take them all alive!"

And as he spoke he prepared to clear the defenses at a bound.

Again three flashes, again three reports, and the lumbering giant fell back into the arms of his companions.

"Waste no time—load!" said the hulky voice of the judge.

Then was heard the sound of ramrods, the cocking of guns, and again all was still. The assailants had drawn off, evidently at this obstinate defense, which by some mysterious accident, though it had severely wounded all the ruffians, had not yet taken a life.

"Look out!"

A sudden discharge of guns followed this cry, and then a whole arsenal of fire was cast within the large room in the hope of distracting the besieged; but none wasted a shot. Every eye was fixed on the door, ready to greet the first invader with the refection he deserved.

Suddenly the judge uttered a wild cry of anguish, and would have turned, but before he could do so he was pinioned from behind by two powerful arms, and hurled to the ground.

One of the brothers had, during the uproar, climbed by means of a tree—cut for the purpose—to the roof, and made his way thither down-stairs, taking the gallant and unfortunate judge by surprise.

But he was not done with yet. He was still a tall and powerful man, and the other, though younger, found his match.

"Keep the fiends at bay—I will master this scoundrel," cried the judge, in a cloaked voice.

The spangled women made no reply, but leaning on their guns, gazed with awe upon the fearful scene before them. The fire on the hearth burned low, the blaze near the door was out, but the hut was almost in total darkness.

The herculean struggle continued, and at length, with a cry of joy, the women saw the father uppermost, kneeling on the other's breast, who lay still and motionless.

"To your guns!" roared the agonized parent.

Too late. While this awful scene of the tragedy had been going on, the other ruffians had glided like shadows into the room, and when the two brave women again prepared for defense, their guns were knocked from their hands and they were prisoners.

Five minutes more, the house, already

on fire in several places above, was in the dark, the dry planks having finally caught fire.

But to a post in the center of the covered yard, with the flames of both his houses sending forth their forked tongues as if to lick him, was safely bound Judge Mason.

At his feet, wounded, half-fainting, half-dead, crouched his wife.

Ella stood pale, glaughly, with a lurid glance in her eyes, held by the wrists by two stalwart ruffians, in whose hands she was but a child.

Mo and two others looked on with dark and lowering brows.

"And so, Judge Mason, we have you now. The men you outraged and debased are your masters. What say you now?"

"Nothing," said the old man. "Take all I have to punish me as you will—but spare my child."

"All you have," sneered Mo; "you have nothing here."

"Nothing here," continued the old man, whose eyes were ever on his daughter, "but I have much elsewhere. I was a very rich man once, and not a poor one now. But, who brings gold into the wilderness? Wait and you shall have rich ransom—only spare my child."

"We can not wait," said Mo, moodily, with a significant glance at his men, "but answer me a question. Where is the young one?"

"Safe! safe!" cried the judge, fury flashing in his eyes.

"Infernal old fool!" roared Mo. "The girl shall and will be found; she was here last night. Where is she now? Answer me, lest I tear your tongue out."

The truck was now suddenly impelled forward at a run, upset against the door, with its load of dry boughs, leaves, and grass, collected with fiendish perseverance.

At the same moment torches were cast upon the pile, which instantly blazed up with fearful energy, while the authors of the abominable attack went away, shrieking, yelling, and laughing.

The three defenders fired, and savage curses told that again the villains were wounded. But as yet not one had paid by death the just forfeit of his misdeeds.

"Bring up water," said the old man;

"ever drop you can."

At this moment a lurid, forked stream of fire rose, almost like a rocket from the pile, causing it to burn with intense brightness. A gourd, half-full of brandy, had cracked in the flames, and spread itself abroad on the huge bonfire.

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every drop of water in the house, they could not extinguish the flames, the judge proceeded to barricade the door to about five feet high with every movable article of furniture in the place, resolved to allow no chance to escape him.

"The door is of dry and seasoned wood," he said, "and will soon burn; the logs will

"Look at me," said Ella, with a cold smile on her lips; "unhand me first. I thank you. Look at me, sir bandit. Am I one to flinch? am I one to hesitate? have I not fought bravely? Speak, I ask you."

"Like a she-devil!" was the reply.

"Well—fit mate for devils. You wish to make me the sacrifice—let it be so. I will sacrifice myself—but on two conditions: you save them, and let me choose amongst you my mate, who shall then protect me again."

The bandits gazed at one another with mingled terror, admiration and doubt. They began to see in her one worthy of the

closer and closer to the ridge on the north-east of them.

The sky was clear, and while they were passing along in this manner, the moon appeared above the ridge behind them, casting a dim light over the forest, and helping them on their way at the same time that it also increased the danger of their being seen by the Indians who were leaving no stone unturned to detect and capture them.

Occasionally Whiffles panted and listened, while Calamity was never more alert and keen-sighted. So long as he gave no sign of disturbance, a certain feeling of security was with all; it was only when he showed uneasiness that the lovers apprehended

out trouble.

No little progress was made in this direction, and the reaction of hope was strong with all, when as if to remind them they were doomed beyond all question, Nick Whiffles exclaimed:

"By mighty! if we ain't runnin' afoul of another of their infernal camp-fires, do you observe that?"

As he spoke he pointed into the wood, where the well-known glimmer was distinguishable, directly ahead of them, and in such a position that had they continued their progress they could not have saved themselves from running directly into it.

Again the veteran trapper was nonplussed. Why this second camp-fire should be so near him, he could not understand.

"What could it be?" the Indian asked himself, pausing and gazing at the form, doubtful whether it was that of a dead or dying man.

As the savage was now situated, the latter was between him and the

except the teacher, and he got burned up before he could get out.

"So I got out of that difficulty very hand-some, but only to tumble into another, for when I was in St. Louis, some thief in the crowd finding himself hard chased, took the money out of the pocket-book and slipped the pocket-book in my pocket, and then grabbed me by the collar, and yelled, *stop thief!*

"That and some other things disgusted me with the settlements, and I struck out for the perjuries and mountains.

"I was young in them days, and I hadn't been out here long afore I fell in love with a beautiful squaw, and spent a year in courting her from a distance, and then when I got a chance to come nearer, I see'd she was a big warrior; that slammed his tomahawk at my head, and that I had to sothe by leavin' daylight through his skull.

"Every man must have his difficulties, I suppose. Here Ned come all the way across the ocean to get the gal he loves and loves him, all 'cause there was a difficulty that wouldn't let 'em take her away with the rest of the family, and new when he comes all the way after her, here's the condemnedest difficulty of all; we've got the critter, but here's the yellin' when we're goin' to git her clear away.

"I send Ned out to make a rakkinoisance, and he agrees to meet me, and he don't do it—some little condemned difficulty is in the way; he's run outside of me, which, howsoever, is better than runnin' inside, and we've got to crawl around here in the dark for a good while afore we run afoot of each other.

"That's allers some difficulty fur a man to stumble over, or to stop him, but I suppose if there wasn't he'd get to runnin' so fast that there'd be no stoppin' to him."

It was very evident from Nick's manner that he was not alarmed at the absence of his friend. He supposed that it had all resulted very naturally, and that they would soon find each other.

Nick was quite sleepy, too, but he was also so much accustomed to self-denial and privation that he easily stayed off his creeping drowsiness. He was so far away from the fire that none of its light could possibly strike him, although he could plainly see the moving figures near it.

Calamity still crouched at his side, and the trapper affectionately laid his arm over his neck, as a lover would have done.

"I order to be kicked to be talkin' 'bout difficulties, when God has been so clever to me, and what animile is there that He ain't blamed sight kinder to than he deserves? All through my difficulties He has took care of me: I'm healthy (especially at feedin' time), and the pup here still sticks by me."

"Then there's Shagbark at home—one of the smartest animiles that ever kicked a varmint over. Shagbark hasn't had much of a hand in gettin' the gal out of the power of the varmints, cause we've had to use our canoes; but he's home gettin' fat, and will be ready to take the next trail with me. Me and Shagbark have seen some hard times together, and I've found his heels a pretty handy thing when the reds kin down on us rather too heavy."

The fact of it was that, although Nick Whiffles was disposed to talk very much of his "difficulties," he did not intend to do so in a complaining sense, but rather, for his own amusement. He could not help feeling that he was under the greatest obligations to the Providence that had brought him through so many dangers to see his advancement.

About this time Nick began to feel so much apprehension regarding his friend that he turned back and resumed his search.

"It may be that he's finished his rakkinoisance, and has gone back to court that gal," he muttered, believing such a thing possible, but hardly probable.

So he went over most of the ground that he had already trod over taking a sort of zigzag course, but still without accomplishing anything toward finding his man.

So much time had now passed that he began to feel serious alarm, and finally he made the last resort.

"Calamity, I'm a little uneasy 'bout the lad; do you go and hunt him for me."

The dog at once trotted off in the darkness, fully sensible of the duty that was required of him.

Back and forth and around he went, until finally he struck the scent, and he followed it as if he were a bloodhound.

The Indian that was stealing upon the sleeping figure of Ned Mackintosh had already drawn his knife, and had decided where to drive it home, when a slight rustling behind him caused him to turn his head.

As he did so, a huge dark body, like a cannon-ball on the ricochet, struck him with such violence as to throw him over and over, while the fangs of Calamity were fixed with such immovable fierceness in his throat that the red-skin, after a few spasmodic struggles, stretched out dead.

It was all done with inconceivable quickness. The almost human foresight of the dog seemed to tell him that his human enemy would bury the gleaming knife in his body if only the opportunity was given, and so he crushed the life out of him at once and completely.

There was no outcry, but the flinging of the leaves so close to the head of Mackintosh aroused him, and he rose to the sitting position just as Calamity released his iron jaws from the throat of the Indian.

One glance and the young man understood all. He saw that the dog had rescued him from death—a fate incurred by his own remissness—and he impulsively threw his arms about the animal.

"God be thanked for sending you in time!" he exclaimed; "but for you I would not have been a living man this minute."

How came Calamity to be upon the spot at this opportune time?

A moment's reflection served to explain it to him. He had doubtless been sleeping on the ground for a long time, until the wearied Nick had sent Calamity to search for him.

"I am sorry I forgot myself, and gave the trapper this anxiety," reflected Mackintosh, as he began cautiously retreating from his dangerous position; "but at the same time I am very glad I have been able to secure a good hour or two of slumber, for I needed it at bed enough, and might have taken it at a time when it would have put the rest in more danger."

As he had no idea of the proper course to take to reach Nick Whiffles, he put himself under the guidance of Calamity, who, as a matter of course, speedily brought the two men together. Ned confessed to his falling asleep, and explained how the dog had dis-

covered him just in time to save his life from the ferocious Blackfoot.

"The pup done the same thing for me once," replied Nick, "who took 'em all as a matter of course; 't's just like him, just like him."

"What are you going to do when he dies?" asked Ned, looking admiringly at the brute. "I shouldn't consider myself safe a day, leading your life without him."

"I got him at the Selkirk settlement eight years ago, and I think he's good for several seasons yet; he's got plenty relatives there, and I'll hunt 'em out when he keels over, and take some of his nephews or descendants."

"You will keep him till he pegs out with old age?"

"Unless he goes under afore I expect, howsoever, that Calamity will be my dog when I git to heaven; for you can't make me believe that such dogs hain't got souls like the rest of us."

Mackintosh had no wish to disturb the pleasant belief of the trapper, and so he let his assertion pass undispersed.

"How long do you suppose I have been sleeping?" he inquired.

"Well, he goes under afore I expect, howsoever, that Calamity will be my dog when I git to heaven; for you can't make me believe that such dogs hain't got souls like the rest of us."

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QUEEN OF THE WEEKLIES."

Foolscap Papers.

My Railroad.

I AM the honorable President of the great railroad that connects the two great cities, Oleander and Overyander; and the few words which I shall say about it I shall say.

I designed the railroad myself, and superintended the surveying of the route. Our surveying instruments consisted of a plumb-bob, a ten-foot pole, a pair of compasses—we couldn't get a single one—a piece of string, and a four-gallon jug.

The country lying between the two places is remarkably hilly, and in trying to get round the worst hills and owing to the variation in the two points of the compasses, we came out at the same place where we had begun, with ourselves and the jug terribly out of spirits in consequence; but, setting out again we got through very satisfactorily. The line crossed the Styx river so much that we concluded to run it right down the middle, and, instead of having to build two hundred and fifty short bridges make only one; this bridge is twenty-five miles long. The main tunnel is seventeen and a half miles long; we could have avoided having any tunnel, but a railroad nowadays is not railroad at all if it can't support at least one. The balance of the route, forty-two miles, makes beautiful triangular fields, and three-cornered houses and barns, besides a good deal of dissatisfaction generally among the farmers. The original shares were twenty-five cents each. I made them at that figure so that they possibly couldn't get much less. The money rolled in rapidly till the last share was taken. I had entire control of the funds, and I may say right here that a good deal of that money I spent on the railroad—a good deal of it, indeed! The first money I spent for the road was to build me a fine house, brown-stone front; then it was necessary for the early completion of the road that I should have a fine turn-out, with the driver in livery—when he wasn't in liquor, and a large part of the money I deposited in the bank for the use of the road—but subject to my order entirely. The road was graded in short order. Sometimes when we came to a hill it was necessary to run the road around it spirally, somewhat like the *ouïe* up the tower of Babel, until it reached the top, then down again by a similar twist. The grade in some cases was only twelve hundred feet to the half-mile, which is a great thing in the way of economy in steam when the trains are going down. The road was completed one year ago, and is one of the most successful in the United States.

We charge nothing for passengers, but make it up by charging a good deal for trunks, so this may be called the Grand Trunk Railway No. 2.

Trunks are not smashed only at the owner's risk, and then the baggage-master has a right to charge for the extra time and trouble in breaking them.

Trunks stolen will be recovered by the owners as soon as possible.

Engineers going down grade seeing another train coming up are instructed to whistle Yankee Doodle and keep right ahead, as "backing out" is not allowed on this road under any consideration whatever.

Engineers are ordered to keep their whistles continually wet.

In the event of a smash-up, passengers are ordered to get out from among the ruins as quickly as possible.

Persons killed will be furnished with respectable burial by agents established along the route for that purpose.

All trains on this road are stopped by throwing logs on the track.

When a car rolls down a hill the passengers are expected to keep their seats, and not spit tobacco-juice on the floor.

Not more than two trains are allowed to run into each other at one time. Three trains doing so will receive the immediate censure of the President.

Passengers are not allowed to walk ahead

on the track and give the engineers unnecessary alarm.

The trains on this road allow nothing else but time to get ahead of them, and to prevent that the engineers' watches are all set one day behind.

Noisy passengers are not allowed on the trains. N. B. This does not apply to members of the Legislature or local politicians.

The speed of the trains will be regulated by circumstances, and depend very much upon whom they have to wait, and how long it takes them to dress.

No conductors allowed on this road.

Ladies are positively forbidden to smoke in the gentlemen's car.

In going up grades the passengers are expected to walk and push.

Farmers along the route who have cows killed by the engines will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law for having such slow cows.

Two trains each going the same way on the same track are not allowed to run a race to see which will get ahead, as is often the case on other roads.

Elephants are carried at so much per hundred—that is to say, at so much a hundred pounds, and one trunk included.

Mill-dams and gravel-pits positively not received as freight.

The profits of the road will go to liquidating the President's pecuniary affairs, and the losses will be divided among the stockholders.

Passengers must not complain if their car in the hurry of business is sometimes left on a side-track a day or two, or is coupled between two hog-cars occasionally on hot days.

If the trains frequently start off without the engineer they will do it at their own risk.

That the Insurance companies have refused to sell accident tickets on this road is a matter of great regret, but it can't be helped.

If you can't travel over this road yourselves, send your wives and mothers-in-law.

The President,

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

THE PEOPLE.

How to educate *The People*? That's the question that has puzzled wise heads from the early days of the world down to the enlightened age known as the nineteenth century.

When we say educate, we take it for granted that it means to make *The People* better and wiser—that it means more schoolhouses and fewer prisons and workhouses.

But the great trouble always has been to find out how to get at "*The People*".

In this life there are, say, a thousand poor men to every one rich man. The thousand poor men belong to that peculiar tribe which from time immemorial has borne the generic title—"The People."

By what occult process the possession of the glittering metal termed gold lifts a man out of the ranks of "*The People*" we will not attempt to explain. Suffice it that, therefore, when we speak of educating the people, we don't refer at all to the man who happens to be the happy owner of a brown-stone front and a large bank account. By some peculiar reasoning—we don't exactly understand how the result is got at—a man who possesses gold is also supposed to possess education. At any rate, the world does not presume to doubt the fact.

Gold, as we dig it out of the earth, wash it from muddy sands, or crush it from quartz-rock, is simply a soft metal of a peculiar yellowish-redish color; rather pretty for ornament, but of very little use—if any at all—in the useful arts.

But this same soft metal has one wonderful power as a medium of education.

Take a poor, stupid fellow, not able to write his own name; let him be a mimic at "Poker Flat," "Jackass Gulch," or any other of the "poetically" named places of the far-famed Pacific slope, and there strike "jug-dirt," his education is finished at once.

No more one of the common herd—one of "*The People*"—he becomes a member of the preferred class—the select few. The yellow metal gives him what he never was accused of possessing before, brains—sense!

We are told that State-prison convicts pine more for tobacco than any other luxury of freedom! Shame upon the man who is such a slave to his appetite.

A continued use of tobacco transforms a man. His will is subjugated, his temper is made irritable, he is rendered selfish by its effects—every thing in the world is of less account to him than a pound of tobacco if he can not get it. The whole man is changed, degraded by the pernicious drug he willfully puts in his mouth to steal away his manhood.

Then smoking! Old clay pipes, black with the nicotine of unnumbered smokes, meerschaums fragrant with the gathered perfume—ugh!—of years, and cigars whose "aromatic" breath makes one suddenly remember all the sins they ever committed—they all go together and are all filthy.

Some may have vague suspicions from my talk that I dislike tobacco. But I don't dislike it. Dislike is a word altogether inappropriate. I hate it. Dr. Holmes asks,

"who can grudge the Arctic voyagers, resting at evening when their freezing day's journey is over, the pipe of tobacco they take with such calm enjoyment after their coffee?"

I have no scruples about saying I would. What business have they to soil the white ice-fields with tobacco spit, and poison the air with smoke, to say nothing of the injury to themselves?

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LETTER ARTLEY IRONS.

PICKLES.

No, ma'am, not a domestic receipt, for Mr. JOURNAL can find enough matter to put in his paper, without being obliged to call on those things to make his paper sell. He leaves those articles for almanacs and publications that can not exist without them.

The pickles I have reference to are what I hope you will keep out of, for they are of a very salty nature!

It is so easy to put a wrong construction on the remarks of another, and then repeat your side of the story, heedless of the consequences. If your version proves to be the wrong one, your only excuse will be—*"Well, I really thought so."* You take a walk some fine summer afternoon, and call at the widow Green's. As you enter, you see her hiding a note. You draw your own inference, and what is it? Why, simply this: "Widow Green was caught in the act of reading a love-letter, and her husband had only been in his grave two months. Such a woman's conduct is perfectly shocking. It is a gross libel on her sex. Her more particular neighbors should know of it." And they do know of it. Before night-fall the news has spread like wildfire. Every one is conjecturing about who the lover is. Suspicions are raised against all the widow's masculine acquaintances of the village. Mrs. Green is a good deal shunned by her former friends, and she, too proud to ask the cause, wonders why her friends do not visit her. By accident she learns the particulars, and how, think you she explains her reprehensible conduct? Well, the widow had enough love for her dead husband to read over some of his letters written to her when they were first engaged. She thinks them too sacred to allow other eyes to gaze on them, and naturally hides the precious missives.

Haven't you got yourself into a nice pickle by your scandal-loving propensities? It isn't best to be always *too* sure of every thing. If you see a careful wife brushing off the dust from her husband's coat, you mustn't report it all about that she was beating him, for you'd only get yourself into a pickle. Half of these ill reports circulate to have these simple things for a foundation. I always think it a good plan to say nothing of any one, unless it is to speak well of them, but like the rest of mankind and womankind, I find it very hard to practice my own precept. If I did, I should have less pickles to answer for.

Don't go into your neighbor's house to take a meal, and then complain to others about the fare presented. If you don't like the place, stay away, but don't get yourself into a pickle by making enemies of your friends.

It isn't exactly right to mention doctors and undertakers in the same breath; it looks too much as if you considered that the former helped the latter, and it might bring on a case of libel.

And, my sister, if you are married to a man who is not all he should be, try what you can to wean him from his evil associates and bad habits. You know you promised him at the altar to cling to him through weal and woe, but you did not say that you would rush to some other man's arms for protection, and drive your husband mad.

A woman can not be too careful of her rep-

utation, yet she can, and ought to, be the one to make her husband and her home happy. There is too much estrangement altogether between man and wife. If he does wrong, why should she do the same? A few words of simple understanding between these two would prevent many a pickle, and fewer divorces would be the result. Mr. Husband goes out. Mrs. Wife asks where he has been. He doesn't like to be questioned, and salt peter and brimstone follow. Mr. Husband goes off to drown his sorrows in the wine-cup, while Mrs. Wife flies to some other man's protection. There are too many only too willing to aid her. Whether she is guilty or not, the world will censure her, and the world's opinion goes a great way. Why does the world talk of such things? For the simple reason that we too often give it a chance to do so. I'll say no more, lest I get into a pickle myself.

EVE LAWLESS.

THE BLESSINGS OF FARM LIFE.

BY THE "FAT CONTRIBUTOR."

PURSUANT to a long announced engagement, I suddenly appeared before the Farmers' Club at its late session, impelled thereto by enthusiasm inspired by the perusal, for the tenth time, of Uncle Horace's Popular Romance, "What I Know About Farming." The Club arose as I entered, giving three cheers—splint-bottomed, as I afterward discovered by an unpleasant puncture, in conclusion. I was welcomed as fresh from the sod—a child of nature, seeing that, having slept in a barn, the previous night, my hair was full of hay seed, and my shoes slightly discolored with barn yard, *odor de verbeine*. This commanded me to that company of congenial souls. [What they don't know ain't worth planting.] I discoursed to the brethren for some time, from notes taken from my hat before I discovered that these notes had yet sixty days to mature in. Then I changed my line of treatment—went for banks and deposits and subterranean bores to the general sweet influences on the heaving hills, etc.

Then smoking! Old clay pipes, black with the nicotine of unnumbered smokes, meerschaums fragrant with the gathered perfume—ugh!—of years, and cigars whose "aromatic" breath makes one suddenly remember all the sins they ever committed—they all go together and are all filthy.

Some may have vague suspicions from my talk that I dislike tobacco. But I don't dislike it. Dislike is a word altogether inappropriate. I hate it. Dr. Holmes asks,

"who can grudge the Arctic voyagers, resting at evening when their freezing day's journey is over, the pipe of tobacco they take with such calm enjoyment after their coffee?"

I have no scruples about saying I would. What business have they to soil the white ice-fields with tobacco spit, and poison the air with smoke, to say nothing of the injury to themselves?

We are told that State-prison convicts pine more for tobacco than any other luxury of freedom! Shame upon the man who is such a slave to his appetite.

A continued use of tobacco transforms a man. His will is subjugated, his temper is made irritable, he is rendered selfish by its effects—every thing in the world is of less account to him than a pound of tobacco if he can not get it. The whole man is changed, degraded by the pernicious drug he willfully puts in his mouth to steal away his manhood.

LETTER ARTLEY IRONS.

PICKLES.

No, ma'am, not a domestic receipt, for Mr. JOURNAL can find enough matter to put in his paper, without being obliged to call on those things to make his paper sell. He leaves those articles for almanacs and publications that can not exist without them.

The pickles I have reference to are what I hope you will keep out of, for they are of a very salty nature!

It is so easy to put a wrong construction on the remarks of another, and then repeat your side of the story, heedless of the consequences. If your version proves to be the wrong one, your only excuse will be—*"Well, I really thought so."* You take a walk some fine summer afternoon, and call at the widow Green's. As you enter, you see her hiding a note. You draw your own inference, and what is it? Why, simply this: "Widow Green was caught in the act of reading a love-letter, and her husband had only been in his grave two months. Such a woman's conduct is perfectly shocking. It is a gross libel on her sex. Her more particular neighbors should know of it." And they do know of it. Before night-fall the news has spread like wildfire. Every one is conjecturing about who the lover is. Suspicions are raised against all the widow's masculine acquaintances of the village. Mrs. Green is a good deal shunned by her former friends, and she, too proud to ask the cause, wonders why her friends do not visit her. By accident she learns the particulars, and how, think you she explains her reprehensible conduct? Well, the widow had enough love for her dead husband to read over some of his letters written to her when they were first engaged. She thinks them too sacred to allow other eyes to gaze on them, and naturally hides the precious missives.

Haven't you got yourself into a nice pickle by your scandal-loving propensities? It isn't best to be always *too* sure of every thing. If you see a careful wife brushing off the dust from her husband's coat, you mustn't report it all about that she was beating him, for you'd only get yourself into a pickle. Half of these ill reports circulate to have these simple things for a foundation. I always think it a good plan to say nothing of any one, unless it

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MY "BUTTON-HOLE FLOWER."

BY FRED FAIRFAX.

Her eyes are bright as a star of night,
Her laugh is gay as the morning.
Her brow is fair as snow in the morn.
A jewel without adorning.
Her cheeks are red as a rose in its bed,
When the breezes of Summer are blowing;
Her voice has a ring of a rippling spring,
That makes the world of silver flowing.
Her hair is brown, and it ripples down
In graceful coils and tresses.—
It twines in pretty caresses.
Her lips are sweet as the leaves that meet
In the rosebush's bursting gladness;
Though they sometimes bear a thought of care,
And a distant shade of sadness.
My soul is entranced by the light of her glance,
And her smile is warm and winsome—
Oh, she is truly a beauty, my pride—
My heart's own—only precious.
Never forget to love my pet;
I think of her every hour;
And I wait for the time when forever mine,
I shall wear my "Button-Hole Flower."

Strange Stories.

THE BANSHEE. AN IRISH LEGEND.

BY AGILE PENNE.

The dashing waves beat in with a dull and sullen roar on the frowning rocks that guarded the entrance to Ballycastle bay.

The lead-colored clouds looked down loweringly upon the rugged rocks of Downpatrick Head.

No sun that day had lighted up the waters of the bay, or played upon the beetling crags of the Head.

Night was advancing and a solemn gloom hung over sea and land.

The lights that flashed from the towers of Ballycastle upon the dark waters of the bay gave sign of revelry and mirth.

After a bloody war, Peace had once more spread her white wings over poor old Ireland.

The battle of the Boyne water had been fought, and James Stuart, defeated, had fled to France, leaving William of Orange to enjoy the English throne.

Roderick O'Connor, the young owner of Ballycastle, had proved false to all the old-time fealty of his race, and had espoused the cause of the stranger against the Stuart. And now, while ruin and rapine stalked with giant strides throughout Ireland, the owner of Ballycastle, thanks to his adherence to the Orange cause, was high in favor with the English king.

As the gloom of the night came on, the rain-drops commenced to fall.

In the midst of the pelting storm a horseman, wrapped in a heavy cloak and booted to the thighs, rode up to Ballycastle.

Terrence, the porter, had seen the approach of the stranger and appeared in the doorway.

"How far is it to Kilalla, friend?" asked the horseman, in a deep, sonorous voice.

"Kilalla, is it? it's wrong yes are, entirely," replied Terrence. "Faix, yes should have turned off at the cross-roads, twenty miles below."

"Wrong road, eh?" questioned the stranger; "that is bad. The storm promises to be a bad one."

"Sure, you'll not ride to Kilalla in this rain? Light, sur, and stay wid us de night. Sorra stranger was ever turned from Ballycastle if he wanted shelter."

"But, I'm only a poor drover, not fit to mix with grand folks," said the stranger, slowly.

"Then it's welkin ye'll be to take a bite and a sup wid us in de kitchen. The master's married to-night, and there'll be lashin' of things to ate and drink," said Terrence, kindly.

"I'll not refuse your offer."

And the stranger sprung lightly from the saddle. The horse was taken to the stable and the man conducted to the spacious kitchen, where quite a little crowd of the castle domestics and their friends clustered around the huge fireplace.

"God save all here," said the stranger, in greeting, as he took the offered seat and threw off his wet cloak, displaying a common suit beneath, such as a drover would wear, although he had a light sword belt to his side.

The storm howled without, and the little group drew still closer to the roaring fire.

Above the howl of the storm came a low, wailing sound like a woman crying in mortal agony.

"Some one is without in the storm," said the stranger, rising, as if to go to the door.

"Sit down, man!" cried Terrence, in terror; "it's de Banshee that ye hear, keenin' in de storm."

"The Banshee?" said the stranger, in astonishment.

"Yis, there'll be a death in the house before the mornin'," moaned Terrence.

The stranger knew the legend of the Banshee well. The appearance of the weeping woman, wailing in the night, boded death.

"An' on the marriage-night, too; oh, wurrus! I wouldn't stand in the master's shoes for all the gould in the world," said one of the women, mysteriously.

"What has he to do with the Banshee?" the stranger asked.

"Shure, it's the spirit of poor Alleen, the young colleen, that loved the master," said the woman.

"Her spirit?" exclaimed the horseman.

"Maybe you'd like to hear the story," said English Tom, the groom.

"Yes, I confess I would," the stranger replied.

"You see, sir, about two years ago, a brother and sister by the name of Kendrick and Alleen Dermot, lived about five miles from here on the road to Kilalla. The master here, Roderick O'Connor and Kendrick Dermot, had been school-fellows. The master fell in love with Miss Alleen, who was as pretty a girl, with her coal-black hair and eyes and rosy cheeks, as you'd see in a day's ride. Then the war came on. Master Roderick took up arms for King William, while Dermot enlisted in Sarsfield's brigade and fought for King James. The colleen disappeared and no one knew where she had gone to. The war went on. The battle of the Boyne water was fought. Young Dermot was killed in that fight. When the war ended, the master came home, and Alleen Dermot suddenly appeared again in her little cottage. Every one noticed that she looked pale and sickly. The master visited her very often. One night she was taken deathly sick. She sent for the priest. Then the truth came out. She had been secretly married to the master in Dublin, just before the war, but when she came back and

wanted the master to acknowledge her openly as his wife, he told her that the marriage was a false one. It broke her heart and she died. It was not alone the news of the deception that he had practiced upon her that killed her, but he also told her that he was going to marry Miss O'Neal. She never held up her head after that, and with her dying breath she called down Heaven's curse upon him for the wrong that he had done her."

The little group gathered closer together as they listened to the story of the wrong done by "the master," and fearful looks were cast over their shoulders, as though they expected to see the dreaded Banshee, the spirit of the wronged Alleen, glowering through the window upon them.

"And who is this Miss O'Neal that the master is to marry?" asked the stranger.

"The daughter of Redmond O'Neal, of Tubberboun, the richest heiress in Connaught," answered the groom, English Tom.

And then as if inspired by the legend of the Banshee, wild stories were told by different members of the little group that hugged the fireplace so closely.

The bridegroom, Roderick O'Connor, the last of the ancient family that held Ballycastle as their own, was in his chamber, dressing for the ceremony that was to give him wife the beautiful and wealthy Anne O'Neal.

The huge wax candles that lighted up the room burned with a fitful light.

The curtained windows hid the darkness and the storm from view.

Roderick stood before the full-length glass, tying his lace cravat.

Angry and sullen, he had dismissed his valet. It was his wedding-night, but a deep sense of gloom was on his soul. No joyous smile lit up his handsome face. He seemed more like a man preparing for his execution than for his wedding.

"Curse my hand! how it trembles!" he muttered, as his fingers rudely tore the delicate lace of the neck-tie. "What has got into me to-night, I wonder? My fingers seem to be all thumbs."

Then a sudden gust of rain beat violently against the window, and the wind moaned with a plaintive cry, like one in mortal agony.

With a nervous start and a pale face, Roderick turned toward the window. Naught met his eye but the heavy damask curtain that vailed the darkness of the night.

"Pshaw! what a fool I am!" he muttered,

out your window!" and with a rapid motion, Kendrick tore down the curtain that concealed the casement.

O'Connor glanced at the window as though he expected to see the white face of his victim pressed against the glass.

"Take your sword and defend yourself!" cried the brother, drawing as he spoke, and throwing the cloak from his shoulders, exposing his well-knit, powerful form. "I'll give you a chance for your life, murderer though you are."

With the courage of desperation, O'Connor attacked the outlaw.

The shining blades twined around each other like two snakes in close embrace.

The brother was forced back to the window, for O'Connor was the better swordsman of the two.

A thrust out of distance, and Roderick held the life of Kendrick at his mercy. As he raised his hand to deal the death-thrust, his eyes caught sight of a white face pressed against the glass. "Twas the face of Alleen, his victim! The low wail of the Banshee swept into the room.

O'Connor's hesitation cost him his life, for the next moment the steel of the avenger passed through his lungs.

With a groan of anguish, Roderick fell.

An hour after, the guests, impatient, found the bridegroom dead.

On his breast was a paper, on which was written a single line:

"Behold Dermot's vengeance for his sister's wrong!"

Hot chafe was given for the outlaw, but the rocky caves of Connaught hid him well.

The Irish legend had proved to be true. The appearance of the Banshee boded death.

What Lora's Sin Wrought.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

A WINDY sunset it was, with vivid orange-tinted clouds drifting half-anxiously over a parti-leaden sky; and a brisk, chill breeze blowing the long curlis over Lora Ellerton's haughty face as she stood by the park gate; she and Romney Glazier.

She was frowning at the sunset, one would have said, to have seen how her eyes were fixed on the vivid cumuli; and her large, fair hands were twisting and untwisting as she stood there.

Mr. Glazier was watching her, as intently

as she was watching the graying sundown; every curl of those perfect-cut red lips, every frown that gathered on her forehead, where little light flosses of curls clung, every varying light in her brown, intense eyes was noted by him as he watched and waited for her to speak.

They were both more than ordinarily attractive, in manner, appearance and mind: both were proud, and one was poor—and that was why they were standing there at the park gate in that strange, constrained way.

Until since the sunrise of that blustering March day, neither had known of the sudden fortune that had come to Romney Glazier, as it were from the winds, so like a fairy gift it seemed; and now, the money, true to its nature, true to its character of being the root of all evil, was dividing them, even before the sunset glows had faded down the western slope.

Lora Ellerton drew a long breath, and turned her royal face around so that Romney Glazier could see her still plainer; and the words came that he had been waiting for, expecting, yet not wanting to hear.

"My first impression was the true one, Romney. Now that you are rich, you must see more of the world, and more of women, before you take a wife. Not that I want you to give me up," and her sweet, tender voice took, almost unconsciously, a high, sharp tone, and then she laid her hand on his with a rare, proud humbleness, "because I am convinced there is none other for me but you."

He lifted her hand from his palm and kissed the warm fingers before he replied.

"Nor for me, save you, my own Lora. And therefore, why need I go?"

Her luminous eyes lightened for a moment.

"Because I want you to."

And then, when she had spoken, they grew less lightsome again.

"Lora, love, and if I do take this tour for the two years, how will you pass the time while I am gone? You will be constant and true, I know."

"Constant and true!" She repeated the words almost before they had left his lips, and looked half-reproachfully in his eyes.

"You know I will be, Romney," she added, with her serene air of graciousness. "I will bind myself by whatever promises you will; but you, Romney, shall go free; so that if another shall—"

The young man laid his palm over her lips.

"You suggest treason! As if there lives

'another' who can so much as claim admira-

tion from my eyes, much less adoration from my heart!"

He was very handsome and very graceful, and Lora thought how superlatively grand he was as he stood before her in all the glory of his manhood, and laying it all—

his beauty, this grace, this manliness—at her unworthy feet.

And she loved him so; such natures as hers are like rare pearls, of great price, and to Romney Glazier's keeping she had given her all and in full, fully conscious herself that she was his.

But, with all his perfections, he was only a man, as a man's yearning for the intimate friendship of a fair, womanly woman; and Lora Ellerton, knowing as well as he that she was the first love of his heart, was fearful, lest, when irrecoverably bound to him and they together sought new friends, he might regret his early choice. So, with true unselfishness, preferring his good to her own happiness, this love of Romney Glazier's sent him forth.

And he went—not unwillingly!

Ten years had not made such a very great difference after all; and Lora Ellerton, looking at the reflection in her dressing-mirror, was quite certain that the Miss Ellerton of thirty-two was the Lora of twenty-two, only a little more dignified, a trifle *embouyé*, perhaps, certainly very stately in the magnificent ball costume of trailing golden gauze.

More than ever, that night, as she awaited the carriage that was to convey her to the grand *bal* at the *salon* of the Countess De Voicy, Lora Ellerton realized how lonely a life here was, without even one friend who loved her, who cared whether she lived or died.

True, there were "summer friends" by the score whom she could count, but, were she to die, any and all of them would only remark at her funeral cortège, as they had done many a time at her horses and *coupe*, "How stylish!"

Hers had been a remarkably eventful life since the night, ten years ago, when she, the fresh romance of her womanhood, had thought it so good, so unselfish, so noble, to give Romney Glazier a chance to choose between herself and a possible rival.

Well, her nobility had met its reward—

True, there were "summer friends" by the score whom she could count, but, were she to die, any and all of them would only remark at her funeral cortège, as they had done many a time at her horses and *coupe*, "How stylish!"

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She had been dancing the *Lanciers* with this probable suitor of hers, while she was so busy thinking of all this; then the footman called out "Mr. Romney Glazier and lady."

Lora's heart gave a fearful throb as she looked across the room at them; her Romney, a little aged, and so very elegant; the enchanting girl-woman on his arm, so fair-like in her alabaster purity of face, her deep dark-blue eyes, that Lora could see, shone but for Romney Glazier.

She sickened with a deadly agony for the second; then came a dull, dying sigh that assured her it must be buried from sight forever.

She was looking really ill, and Mr. Limberville escorted her to her carriage, and accompanied her home; when he bade her good-night, he kissed her—for they were betrothed during that ride home.

She had never mentioned Mr. Glazier's name to her suitor, nor had he; she buried the sweet sound away down in her heart, and prepared for her wedding. It was to be a very stylish affair, and all the Americans in Paris were to come.

"My daughter Elise will come to see you, Lora, before our wedding, if you will permit me."

She had heard before of this beautiful Elise Limberville, and her heart went out in great gushes of love to her. So she told him to bring her.

"And I will not intrude if I come with her—or perhaps you will allow her lover to accompany her? Elise is in love, too, my dear, as well as her father."

So she gave the permission, never dreaming—well, we wonder as we write how she ever lived over that meeting.

It was Romney Glazier who was betrothed to Elise; Romney who would become her son-in-law.

She sprang to meet him when he entered, so stern and pale, for he knew he would meet her; and when in a wild tumult of anguish and remembrance, she sank on her knees almost at his feet, he stooped with tender hands to raise her, while Mr. Lim

"I've always found it so."

"Another strange fact relating to this calamity. I put my policy in my pocket yesterday, intending to come down to your office and speak about a renewal," Montgomery said.

"Pity you didn't—I speak now as a friend, not as an insurance agent," Hindle observed.

"Why, what difference does it make?" Montgomery asked, looking at Mr. Hindle with astonishment written on his face.

The insurance agent returned the look. He was as much astonished at Montgomery's speech as the young man had been at this.

"Well, your loss wouldn't have been quite so heavy," he said, slowly.

"It is not so very bad," replied Montgomery, somewhat puzzled to guess the meaning of the words of the other.

"Not very bad!" exclaimed the agent, opening his eyes in wonder. "Why it will be a total loss?"

"No!"

"Of course not!" exclaimed Angus, wondering at the apparent stupidity of the insurance agent.

"But why not?" Hindle began to think that the loss of the young man had affected his brain.

"You are strangely forgetful, Mr. Hindle. You ought to be able to remember that I am insured for ten thousand; you wrote the policy."

"You, insured for ten thousand!" exclaimed Hindle, getting a little excited.

"Of course," replied Montgomery, unable to understand why his words should produce such an effect upon Hindle.

"You mean you were insured?"

"No, I don't mean any thing of the sort. I mean that I am insured for ten thousand dollars in the company that you represent. It was to the tenth of October, and to-day is only the sixth," Montgomery replied.

"Good heavens! Mr. Montgomery, your insurance expired yesterday. It was out on the fifth, instead of the tenth. I made a memorandum." And the agent showed it to the young man written in his notebook.

Montgomery read it with a calm smile.

"You have made a mistake, Mr. Hindle; my policy does not expire until the tenth. I am sure of it."

"And I am sure that it expires on the fifth," said the agent, doggedly.

"Now, I can convince you that you are wrong because I've the policy in my pocket. I was going to call upon you yesterday in regard to it and took it from my safe, but for some reason I neglected it."

Then Montgomery took the policy from his pocket, opened it, and by the light of the flames from the burning house, read aloud: "Tenth of October."

There was just a little bit of triumph in Montgomery's voice. He had been sure that the agent was wrong and that he was right about the date.

"Good heaven bless me!" exclaimed Hindle in great excitement. "I can't be crazy—losing my memory. Allow me to look at it, please."

Then Hindle adjusted his eye-glasses and examined the paper carefully.

"Good gracious, Mr. Montgomery!" cried the agent in astonishment.

"What's the matter?" asked Angus, astonished at his manner.

"Why this date has been altered!"

"Of course! I will take my oath that I never made an *h* like that in all my life. My *h's* always have a loop at the top, this one is straight up and down."

"The date altered?" said Montgomery, slowly, and his face looked gloomy and sad as he spoke.

"Yes, I knew I could not be mistaken, for I saw the date in looking over the books yesterday."

"Altered!" Montgomery repeated, slowly. His mind was vainly groping in the dark for some clue to this strange mystery.

"Yes, why, look yourself; can't you detect a difference in the writing? The word tenth is a clumsy imitation of my handwriting, but not a good one by any means."

Montgomery examined it carefully. He saw how true the words of the agent were. The date had indeed been altered.

"But, how could this be done?" he asked, in blank dismay.

"Easy enough," replied Hindle; "the fifth has been taken out by acid and the other date written in its place."

"Yes, I have heard of such things," said Montgomery, slowly and mechanically. His thoughts were far away.

"But I can not understand the reason for such a stupid proceeding," said Hinkle, in wonder; "it is of no avail, for the alteration can be detected at a single glance."

"Yes, it is plain enough to me now, and yet I did not notice it before," Montgomery replied.

"You had no suspicion that there was any thing wrong about it, that's the reason. You only looked at it carelessly. But, as I said before, this appears to me to be a crime committed without any object."

"Not so to me; I can see the object plain enough," and Montgomery's brows grew dark as he spoke.

"And what is it?" asked Hinkle, in wonder.

"To ruin me!"

"Ruin you?"

"Yes," responded Montgomery, hoarsely; "I have foes who are striking at me from the dark, and the blows are not aimed at my breast, but coward-like, they strike at my back. The date of the policy was altered so that I should not have it renewed. And then, the moment that it expired they set fire to my home. I was warned, but I did not heed the warning, blind fool that I was! But now, I'll fight these treacherous villains!"

The insurance agent looked at Montgomery with wonder visibly expressed in every line of his fat face. He began to think that the young man's misfortunes had turned his brain.

"Secret foes?" he stammered.

"Yes, but I'll hunt them down!" exclaimed the young man, fiercely.

"You think the house was set on fire?"

"Yes."

"Why not have the people arrested that you suspect?"

"My suspicion is not proof," replied Montgomery, moodily.

"Can I aid you in any way?"

"No; I must fight the battle alone. Good-night," and Montgomery left the agent abruptly, and disappeared in the crowd.

Mr. Hinkle looked after the young man in astonishment.

"Well, of all the mixed up pieces of business that I have ever had any thing to do with, this is the worst!" he ejaculated. "Secret foes!"—blows in the dark!—I'm mystified."

Pipgan grinned at the compliment.

"Well, I can't say, you know," he said, in a reflective sort of way. "I ain't a block of ice, nor a cowcumber, you know; but I think that I take things easy; and, as for being shrewd, I know just about enough to enable me to take care of No. 1."

"You have already done me one service, and now I have come to ask another."

"All right; I'll do it if I can. As you Americans say, go ahead!"

"If you remember, on our previous meeting, I took you to be a detective officer?"

"Yes, of course," and Pipgan indulged in a quiet laugh. "Just to think of a little fellow like me being taken for a detective!"

"I judged so by the coolness and courage that you displayed."

"Why, bless you!" cried Pipgan, "it

And then the agent turned his attention again to the burning house.

Two men, dressed roughly in dark clothes, their coat-collars pulled up around their necks, and their felt hats pulled down over their foreheads, standing in a dark angle by the shadows, had overheard all of the conversation that had passed between the insurance agent and Angus Montgomery.

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"Of course," replied the other, thoughtfully.

"He guessed that he has secret enemies."

"Yes."

"Why should he guess that he has enemies?"

"He is not a fool. These blows are coming too quick and heavy upon him to be the result of chance alone. Besides, the alteration of the insurance policy, that could only have one meaning."

"We shall have to be on our guard, lest we discover that these blows come from us."

"How can he discover it?" O'Connell asked.

"It is the tool that betrays the master; but we, so far, have used none."

We have done our work ourselves. Each blow we have dealt him has come from our own hands."

"I understand that he says he has received?"

"I understand to what he refers," said O'Connell—"a mysterious woman, who called herself the White Witch, has, by some strange accident, hit upon our very scheme. Of course it is by accident alone, for our secret has been kept, I am sure, by all of us. This meeting took place at the masquerade in Newport, on the very night that we formed our league."

"It is a strange coincidence," said Tulip, with a smile.

"But, this warning that he says he has received?"

"The month has not yet expired—though it is nearly at an end—and I have lost two thirds of my fortune."

"The Dickens you have!" cried the Englishman, with a prolonged whistle.

"The woman that I was engaged to be married to, has quarreled with me and the love has gone."

Pipgan elevated his eyebrows in astonishment.

"But, the friends?" he asked.

"As yet, I haven't lost any, but the prediction referred particularly to one man, and all the words of this mysterious woman come as true as those that referred to the money and love, the loss of my friend was the first blow that fell upon me."

"Then you haven't said all that the White Witch said?"

"No; she further told me that there were three men who hated me and desired my ruin; that these three men had united together to compass their object."

"Why, this is just like one of the stories that they prints in the weekly papers!" exclaimed Pipgan, in amazement.

"Yes, but this story—this fable, seems to be turning into reality, and very quickly," replied Montgomery.

"A league of three," said Pipgan, thoughtfully.

"Yes, and she told me that one of this league was this man who has been my bosom friend."

"Well, it's an ugly case," said the Englishman, thoughtfully; "what do you want me to do?"

"Find out, if possible, whether this man is my friend or my foe."

"It will be a difficult job. I don't see how I can do it," said Pipgan, with a shake of the head.

"Dog his footsteps; find out who his associates are," replied Montgomery, eagerly.

"Well, I'll try; but I don't think that there's the least chance of success," said the Englishman, doubtfully.

"Make the attempt. I will pay well for the service!" exclaimed Montgomery, eagerly.

"Time enough to speak about paying after I've tried," replied Pipgan, carelessly.

"What's his name?"

"Tulip Roche: here in this envelope you will find a paper on which I have written all that I know in regard to his habits and friends; it also contains his address. It may aid you!" And Montgomery gave the envelope to the Englishman.

"Tulip! what a queer name!"

"Yes; it was a whim of his father. When he was born, on his left breast, just over the heart, was a mark shaped like a tulip flower."

"Well, I'll do the best I can."

"When shall I see you again?"

"Say three days. By that time I shall be able to tell whether I can succeed or not."

"Shall I meet you here?"

"Yes, and if it's convenient, make it just about the time."

"Very well."

And so the interview ended.

Montgomery walked up Broadway, his eyes bent thoughtfully upon the pavement.

Despite the action that he had taken, he could not bring himself to believe that Tulip Roche, the man that he had loved like a brother, had turned against him.

"I have acted like a coward, in setting a spy on him," he muttered, as he walked on;

"yet, it is better to prove him innocent than to have these dark thoughts of his guilt haunting my brain."

Then Montgomery, trying to raise his eyes, beheld Agatha Chauncy coming down the street.

The instant she perceived Montgomery she came straight to him with outstretched hand.

"Oh, Mr. Montgomery!" she exclaimed.

"I wanted to see you so much!"

The sight of the girl caused a thrill of pain to shoot, rocket-like, through Montgomery's heart. She brought back to his memory the woman that he was striving so hard to forget. True, he now despised Francis Chauncy, yet often when alone, in the silent hours, when memory was busy in his brain, her face would rise before him, and, like the specter in the romance, would not down at his bidding. Then the thought would come, how happy he might have been in her love.

"Indeed?" Montgomery said, wailing with a courtly smile the agony that was in his heart.

"Yes; I've something that I want to say to you," and Agatha seemed strangely embarrassed as she spoke.

"I'm all attention," Montgomery replied, wondering what she had to say.

"I can't tell you here, with all this crowd passing," she said, hurriedly. "Will you walk down the street with me a little way?"

The two were standing on the corner of Amity street.

"Certainly," Montgomery said.

Getting out of crowded Broadway they walked down the side street.

"Mr. Montgomery—excuse the question—but are you and Frances good friends?"

"I judged so by the coolness and courage that you displayed."

"Why, bless you!" cried Pipgan, "it

didn't require any courage for to frighten the 'Mouse'!"

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A LOVER'S LINES

As the sweet blackberry's modest bloom,
Fair-silvering, green to sight; or
Or strawberries, their rich perfume,
Fragrance and bloom unite,
So this fair plant of tender youth
In outward charms can vie,
And from within, the soul of truth,
Soil-bounding, fills her eye.

Pulse of my heart! I desire source of care,
Stol'n from me, she has spurned my vows!
Sweet is the when, through scented air
Day bloom the apple boughs!
With thee no days can winter seem,
Nor frost nor blast can chill;
The soft breeze, the cheering beam,
That keeps it summer still!

Oath-Bound!

THE MASKED BRIDE.

BY MRS. MARY REED CROWELL,
AUTHOR OF "SHADOWED HEART," "SCARLET CRES-
CENT," ETC.

CHAPTER XI.

PREPARING FOR THE BLOW.

HALF-WAY between The Towers and Edenwilde, on the same side of the river as the Roscoe estate, and standing a considerable distance from the main road, was the cosy, humble cottage of the Halls; the family of whom a trivial mention has been made in a preceding chapter; the place Undine Del Rose had visited the day of her call upon Crystel Roscoe and Bertrand Haight.

It was rather a pretty place, with tall trees hiding it from view, and a faint glimmer of the river visible from its upper windows; a pleasant home for the small family who lived there.

They were but three in number. The husband, Jacob Hall, who was gardener at Edenwilde, his wife, whom the housekeeper at Edenwilde sometimes employed on extra occasions, and Lida, their niece, the child of Mr. Hall's brother, a young woman of twenty, who was Crystel's dressing-maid; who had been in that capacity a long time. She was not a good-looking girl, and had it not been for the faithfulness with which she attended to her duties, she never would have remained at Edenwilde so long as she had.

Her recommendations, coming as they had, together with her aunt's and uncle's, from a friend of Mrs. Haighte, had been greatly in her favor; and so, in spite of her homely face, with its keen, sulken black eyes and the heavy, overshadowing hair, that made her so ugly, she stayed on, year after year, and her mistress became accustomed to her looks completely.

It was Lida Hall that Undine Del Rose had mentioned to Mrs. St. Havens; Lida, who had years before worked for Mrs. Temple, who had recommended the family to Mrs. Haighte.

In those early days, when Undine visited often at the Temples, when she, and Lida and Clifford had not yet been fettered by the courtesies of a fashion that in later years forbade a son and daughter of wealth and aristocracy, associating with a maid of no name, particularly, had played together in Mrs. Judge Temple's carriage-house, and built houses of kindling wood, glad to escape the fine dresses and costly toys awaiting them in the parlor.

Between Undine and Lida had always existed a friendship, although Clifford had completely forgotten her; and, despite the difference in their position, Undine had several times gone to see her, with no particular reason therefor, until the last two times; and then, in the plottings she had instituted, her far-seeing eyes had discerned the fact that of all allies, of all confidantes, there was none on the earth so adapted, both by nature—for she had, with her astute perceptions, long ago read Lida Hall's disposition, which, being not unlike her own in some points, may explain their cold, calm friendship—and acquaintance as Lida Hall.

The position she occupied in the Roscoe household was simply splendid toward the furtherance of her plans; her frequent errands to The Towers was another satisfactory condition.

Had been in September, on one of Undine's visits—that is, rather—at the Hall cottage, that she had seen Bertrand Haighte, in all his attractiveness and elegance as he and Crystel had ridden along the road.

To one of her disposition, it was enough merely to see him; and, despite her existing engagement with Mr. Temple, she made up her mind on the moment that she admired him greatly. Then she thought of him, waking and sleeping, until at last she resolved to win him.

It seemed, perhaps, a most absurd and impossible idea; and to persons of ordinary conceptions, it doubtless would have been. But Undine Del Rose was a woman of no common intellect; one, had it been trained in a noble, high-principled channel, would have made her a 'are, glorious specimen of womanhood. Therefore, the more impasse the barriers, the more determined she became to surmount them; until, her whole soul fired with love for Bertrand Haighte, and a consequent, natural hatred for Crystel Roscoe, she schemed and planned and arranged her mode of procedure.

Several weeks' previous to the day when she had gone to Edenwilde, she had, on a day's visit at the Riverside Lodge—so Lida had named the unpretentious little four-room cottage—been invited by Lida to go over to The Towers with her, on an errand for Miss Helice to Mrs. Haighte's housekeeper, for a recipe or something.

Her dress was as simple, apparently, as Lida's own; and in the plain, brown silk traveling dress, with a large water-proof of Mrs. Hall's around her, and her hair, for a rarity, fastened in a coil, and a brown vail doubled over her face and hands, she truly concluded that if, by accident, she met Bertrand or any one else, they never would recognize her in after times when she might come boldly to The Towers in her new personnel!

Certainly Undine Del Rose was audaciously presumptuous; but it was both her presumption and audacity that should help to carry her through this campaign against Crystel Roscoe's happiness.

Lida introduced her with all formality to the party housekeeper, Mrs. Bowen; but her ears had misled her.

"Yes, I am pleased to meet your friend, Miss Rose. Won't you walk up to the dining-room, Lida? My receipts are all there."

Undine's heart swelled with joy at the accidental misunderstanding.

"It's fate in my favor already," she had whispered to herself.

"If you could spare the time, Mrs. Bowen, I would like to show this lady through the rooms."

"And that's just what I can't do, at all.

I'm sorry, but there's all the maids gone to some fandango or other other down to York, and I'm awful busy foldin' up this line."

"Perhaps you will trust me to show her through? You know me, Mrs. Bowen; I'll be particular."

The housekeeper deliberated a minute before she replied.

"Well, I don't know as I care. Of course

if Miss Crystel trusts you among all her finery, I can where there's nothing but heavy furniture. Be careful now, Lida, to lock all the doors agen."

A fiery red had come in spots to Undine's cheeks at the half-suspicion, but she could afford to conceal it.

Together they went through the elegant, spacious apartments, while Undine noted every object they passed.

At last, having entered the corridor, out of which the doors of the family sleeping-rooms opened, Lida started to return to the dining-room, but Undine detained her.

"You haven't taken me in these yet."

She was pointing at Bertrand's room door.

"But those are strictly private; Mrs. Bowen might not like it. It is Mr. Bertrand's."

"But let us go in—please, Lida."

"No, indeed, I can not—"

"I tell you I am going in; give me the keys."

She was very calm, but Lida knew, of old, that red light in her eyes, as she took the keys from her hand.

"I want you to come in. I want you particularly."

And Lida followed her into Bertrand Haighte's sleeping apartment.

Undine gazed around, her eyes growing tender as they rested on the lace-ruffled pillow where his head had rested; and with a soft, fleet step she stole up to the low rosewood bedstead, and pressed a kiss on the unconscious liner.

"Undine!"

Lida called her name, half-angered, half-amused.

"Yes, it is because I love him so. Now, Lida Hall, I want you to swear to me to keep a secret for me. Will you do it?"

And then, standing in the very room where Bertrand had dreamed of Crystel so many times, Undine told Lida Hall her love; her hopes; her resolves; her plans.

"And now, Lida Hall, I want you to aid me in my work. I will direct you in all things; you need have no mind of your own. Only be guided by me, and success will crown us both. Obey, and the day you call me Mrs. Haighte, I will give you a check for a thousand dollars; refuse, Lida Hall, and my lips shall disclose the secret of your life that I hold! You know of the child found choked to death; so do I. You know its mother, also its murderer? So do I. Now, Lida, which shall it be?"

The girl's face had changed, to a dull ashy pallor, as she looked up in Undine's pitiful, passionate eyes. Then she arose from the footstool, and went up to Undine's bed.

"There can be no alternative. But I ask, is there blood to be shed? if so, you may kill me at your feet first."

"You committed murder once, are you soft-hearted now? But for your comfort, I do not think of any such desperate measures. Listen, let me tell you."

So she told her, in full detail, what must be done, in a low, eager voice that sent creeping shivers down the listener's back.

"You seem surprised that I have obtained this knowledge; but I tell you, Lida, I believe Satan himself has aided me. Some day I will tell you where I learned what to do; the next thing is to obtain possession of these papers."

Lida went slowly after Undine down the stairs; on the landing she turned.

"Y' u go first, and don't forget what you are to do."

Then they went home, and in the gathering dusk, where no one ever met her, Undine went back to the city.

One month later she had returned; and One Hall met her with a parcel.

"I did not do as you directed, but have accomplished what you bade me do."

"Not as I said?"

"Fate planned it better. Mrs. Bowen has been sick of diphtheria, and just recovered—still only convalescing. There was no one to nurse her, the girl being away on their vacation; my aunt is also on a visit, and Miss Crystel offered my services. I had the house to myself—what better chance could have been offered?"

Undine stood, with wide eyes, listening, a triumphant smile irradiating her face, as she clutched the papers.

"I was so afraid lawyer Allan was wrong; I have promised him five hundred dollars for his disclosure of the stronghold of this document. How little the Haightes dream of the peridy of their talented, fashionable executor!"

Lida leaned her head wearily on her hands, while Undine was greedily running over the faded papers, and still holding a ring between her fingers.

"It is strange you found this, too. I heard lawyer Allan say it had not been seen for years."

"It is because I searched the old secretary so thoroughly. I suppose, I must go down, Undine, I feel so wretched."

And her flushed face denoted her feelings.

"Perhaps you are getting the diphthe—good Heavens, Lida, what if my all-powerful star is in the ascendancy? You take this disease from Mrs. Bowen, I take your place as Crystel Roscoe's maid!" Lida, I hope, I pray you may have the diphtheria!"

A little horrified cry broke from Lida's lips.

"Not that it will make any difference at all to my plans, for you know I intended becoming a member of the Roscoe family by some means or other; only this is all so natural, so unexpected. Remember, I shall return by to-morrow night in answer to a telegram from you to *Annette Willoughby*—you will remember that name, because your baby was to be named that in case it had lived. Whatever my disguise, betray no surprise; and satisfy the Halls that I am a sister of Joe Willoughby, your lover. You understand, Lida? Remember, to propose me immediately to Miss Roscoe. And now, hoping to find you ill when I return in answer to a telegram, I will go directly home, to prepare my costume for this delightful *bal masque*."

The ceremony began; it ended, and Bertrand turned to kiss his bride.

watched her away, as she hastened down the lonely roadside to the station.

There Undine hired a horse; and, arranging her slightly-disheveled toilet by the little cracked looking-glass in the ladies' saloon, she started forth to Edenwilde, on her mission of sin; from thence to The Towers, and then home, well satisfied as to her success.

But at home the days wore on, and there came no telegram from Lida Hall; she wondered what it meant; she knew she had not play her false.

Bertrand almost screamed.

"Good God, what does this mean? *Undine Del Rose*!"

A sudden rush forward of the guests; a murmur among them, as of an angry surge, Helice sprung forward with a deathly pale face.

"Where's my sister, woman? how dare you, how dare you!"

She dashed through the guests, her long silken dress trailing after her, to her sister's room; while Bertrand and General Roscoe stood like men turned to statues.

Then the bridegroom aroused from the stupor he had been, momentarily suffering, and advanced to Undine, who, calm, pale and collected, stood her well-won ground.

"Woman! friend! you shall answer for this! General, let us to Crystel, the poor darling—hold, where is she?"

"In her room," she returned, calmly.

The men started to the door, whither half of the guests had rushed to learn of Crystel, when suddenly General Roscoe turned about.

Then the bridegroom followed from the stupor he had been, momentarily suffering, and advanced to Undine, who, calm, pale and collected, stood her well-won ground.

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THE GIFT OF SLIPPERS.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Dear girl, I thank you for the gift,
These slippers fine and neat,
Which came so happily to hand
And went so soon to feet.

The flowers bloom richly on the toes,
By fairy hands inwove;
The golden braid on velvet laid,
In pretty spirals crawl—
Indeed, how beautiful these are,
To be a size too small!

And round about the heels entwine
The tendrils of the grape;
Alas, that I should put them on
And put them out of shape!

The Felon's Wife.

OR,

THE SIREN'S SECRET.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

"My God! what must I do? Can it be that—But no, he is dead, years since. It can not be that!—and yet it says *my secret!* that he will unmask me!" murmured a lady seated in a richly-furnished chamber of a mansion situated in the more aristocratic portion of the "Crescent City."

She held a note tightly in her hand, and raising it, glanced over its contents for the twentieth time.

"*Emeline Murray:* One who knows you well, who can tell you all the hidden secrets of your past life, your real name as well, has need of your services. As a proof, I need only mention the two names—*Alfred Maeder and Jennie Fosser*. If you consent to assist me, all is well. If not, I will unmask you and show the old dotard who hopes to marry his daughter's governess what a serpent of evil he has harbored. Meet me at nine o'clock this night, at the foot of the grounds, and I will tell you the conditions upon which I will keep silence. If you fail, I will expose your secret."

"Can it be that he—my husband—is still alive? I will meet him at the foot of the garden to-night—I must!" murmured the lady, in an audible tone.

Then, alarmed at the sound of her voice, she glanced wildly around the room. Nothing met her gaze to alarm her, and then slipping—as she thought—the note in her pocket, left the chamber. Scarcely had the door closed, when the curtains of the bed were raised and a comical object slowly crawled from its covert and hastily clutched the note.

The new-comer was a diminutive negro girl, grotesquely deformed, but with a face expressive of cunning curiosity. Turning the paper around and over, the negress peered at the writing with an expression of baffled inquisitiveness.

"I al'ays said dat Mis' 'Liny was a snake—a sarpint—an' now I knows it! She gwine to marry off' marse, an' done got one o' man a'ready! Lord! wish I knowed how to read dis yere. Looks jest like a lot o' mashed bugs, it does. She's gwine to see de feller w'a' rit dis yere? So'm I!" and then the darky tightly rolled up the note, and placing it in her breast, silently stole from the apartment.

That night, a little before the appointed hour, a female figure, closely wrapped in a heavy shawl, left the house and glided stealthily down the broad gravel walk leading to the foot of the spacious, park-like grounds. In a few minutes she was startled by a man leaping over the high stone wall, who approached her.

He was tall, and evidently disguised; a slouched felt hat covered his brow, and he wore a long cloak, that he kept close about his face. He spoke, in a low, clear tone:

"So, Mrs. Maeder, you concluded to grant my request?"

"For an interview—yes," replied the lady, her tones faltering, as if with surprise, or ill-concealed fear. "Good! the rest will follow. First, before telling you my plans, let me recall the past, to prove that I am no impostor. Once upon a time—to begin in the good old way, you see—there lived an angelic couple, man and wife. He was a counterfeiter, and she helped him about the work. He was finally detected and sentenced to fifteen years hard labor. That was nine years since. He attempted to escape, and—so at least the papers had it—was shot dead while swimming the river. His body was never found.

"This woman finally went South. Of her life in the mean time I shall not speak. It would hardly bear repeating. She came South, and at last secured a position as governess in a wealthy gentleman's family—Edward Lansing was his name—and the old man fell in love with her. The time was set for the wedding, and all preparations made. Bah! what is the use of this dallying? You are this convict's wife. You have never had a divorce. What if I tell Lansing who and what you are? Will I tell life or forced widowhood bear inspection, think you?"

"Who are you?" faltered the woman.

"Never mind. But look; do you recognize this portrait? It was once accounted very like Alfred Maeder," and as he spoke, the cloaked stranger produced a small daguerreotype and held it before her.

"What do you ask of me?" she humbly added, raising her head with a subdued air.

"Just this. I know that old Lansing has a large sum of money in the house that he keeps locked up in an iron safe. I need that, and as I can not open the safe without making enough noise to alarm the household, I wish you to help me. Can you get the keys? Wait—do not speak hastily; for unless you hand them to me this night, sure as death I will unmask you!"

"I can get them. He keeps them in a drawer at the head of his bed while sleeping. I will get them—but when?"

"As soon as be sleeps. I will be on the watch about eleven. If you succeed, bring them here. If you do not—"

"Bear your threats. I am in your power and can not refuse. But who are you?"

"I was called Alf. Maeder, but I am now—well, never mind. It is hardly wise to mention names."

"You promise never to molest me after this? for unless you swear by all that you hold sacred, never to betray by word, act, or sign, what you know of the past, I will refuse to do this deed, and let you do your worst," firmly cried Emeline, or Jennie Maeder.

"I promise. You know that I never yet broke my word when I swore by the memory of my dead mother. I swear never to trouble you again, if this plan works well," earnestly, almost solemnly replied the man.

"I will trust you. Be here at the time set, and you shall not be disappointed."

"Very well—but no treachery!"
"You can trust me if I trust you," simply replied the woman, turning and gliding away, with the dark shawl shrouding her pallid features.

Alfred Maeder turned and scaled the wall, not noticing the little dusky figure that lay curled up beneath a bush, in close proximity to where the dark plot had been formed, having doubtless overheard every word of the conversation. When the sound of his footsteps died away, the little negro girl crept out of the bush, and stood for a moment scratching her caput with wonderful vigor.

"I knowed it—I did! She's a sarpint, she is, now, fer shure! I'm just agwine right straight off' nd tell o' marse. Buu the won't b'lieve me 'less I show him dat pap wid de smashed bugs on it. I'll go git dat fust!"

And then the negro darted away, and in a few minutes more had told Anna Lansing, her young mistress, what she had heard, and the two were closeted with the old gentleman for some time.

At the usual hour Edward Lansing proceeded to his chamber, outwardly calm and composed, but his face bore the traces of a fierce struggle. The cup of fancied bliss had been rudely dashed from his lips, and had fallen to the floor.

It was hard for him to believe that the lovely woman was such a crime-stained and hardened creature, but he could see no excuse. He had resolved to completely unmask her, and after placing the safe key in the drawer, he extinguished the light and feigned slumber.

After a time the door was noiselessly opened and Emeline entered, having a shaded lamp. Quickly securing the key she retreated.

Lansing listened intently until he heard the inner door close, and then resuming his garments and securing a brace of pistols, he crept down to the library and concealed himself.

He had not long to wait, for the guilt-leagued couple speedily returned to the house. Cautiously entering the library, Maeder opened the slide of a dark lantern. By its bright rays, with the aid of the key, he opened the safe door.

At the same instant Lansing uttered a low whistle, and the door flew open. There stood Anna and Sally, bearing lights.

"Hold!" sternly cried Lansing, threatening the robber with his pistol. "Move a step and you are a dead man. Be quiet and tell me what all this means, and I may al-

live."

"There was not much to be done in the way of preparation, from the simple fact that nothing could be done."

"They either had to desert the place and

"With pleasure," promptly replied the captain. "It was told me by Colonel C—himself, and you know he is not the man to be led into any exaggeration of facts, however great his regard for the actor therein may be."

"The Government had, for the last half a dozen years, shamefully neglected this post; in fact, it had, to use the colonel's favorite expression, permitted it and its affairs to 'run down at the heel,' until, at the time of which I speak, it was in no condition whatever to withstand an Indian attack with the slightest hope of successful resistance."

"What with the garrison dying off, deserting, and being regularly discharged, the men constantly going out and none coming in, it soon came to be known that there remained not one-half the regular, required force."

"And then the defenses were in miserable condition; and more, and far worse than all else, the ammunition was actually permitted to run almost entirely out."

"There never was such a case of criminal negligence, and I have thought since that *someday* was surely to blame."

"Such was the condition of affairs, when, one night, on rather morning—for it was long past the middle watches—the sentinel on duty at the gate announced a man without, who desired admittance and an instant interview with the commandant."

"It proved to be a Moque Indian, and he had evidently traveled far and fast."

"His news was of the utmost importance; indeed, it ultimately had to do with the saving of the post and all in it."

"The Northern Indians, I mean by that those tribes lying north of the fort, were preparing for their yearly foray into the Mexican and outlying settlements, and it was their purpose to include this post in their wide sweep, and, if possible, sweep it off the face of the earth."

"That was about it, I suppose."

"The Moque had been sent in by a young hunter who had just returned from a scout into the Indian country, where, by a daring venture, such as we often read of, but seldom seen in reality, he had learned the plans and routes of the great foray."

"He himself, had gone eastward to warn the posts above us, and would then hasten down to give what assistance might be in his power."

"There was not much to be done in the way of preparation, from the simple fact that nothing could be done."

"Behind the rocks, with rifles thrown forward for instant use, crouched the regulars,

"To cross the range of mountains lying north of the fort, the Indians would be compelled to pass through Kennedy's canon—a narrow, rugged defile, in certain parts of which not more than three or four warriors could ride abreast."

"He offered to take as many of the garrison as the colonel could spare, and there await the attacking party."

"A stand could be made for some hours at least, and then, when too hard pressed, they could fall back upon the fort."

"When Colonel C—came to count up the force at his command, and found that he could scarce spare twenty men for this dangerous duty, he hesitated a while, but finally, seeing the absolute necessity, he reluctantly gave the order to call for volunteers."

"The men were all old regulars, and they had been closely 'inspecting' the young stranger who was to lead them, and must have been well satisfied, for every fellow of them stepped forward at the call."

"But twenty, however, could be spared, and these were selected by the colonel himself."

"At midnight the little band filed out the gate, and at once struck off at a gallop in the direction of the canon."

"What took place there has been graphically told by Sergeant Collins, a grim, gruff old Scotchman, who was never before known to praise anybody or any thing, but who was, in this case, exceedingly enthusiastic."

"The young scout posted his little band with great skill, keeping always in view the possibility of sudden defeat, and therefore leaving a wide hole to creep out of in case of reverses."

"For this purpose he dismounted his men behind a slight eminence, some two hundred yards from the mouth of the canon, leaving the horses there in charge of one man, while with the others he advanced to the opening."

"Here he left ten more, and with the remaining nine he pushed further on to where the gulch suddenly narrowed to a width of less than a dozen feet."

"At this point the walls of the canon ran perpendicular upon either side to a great height, while the bottom was thickly strewn with great fragments of rock that had, from time to time, fallen down from above."

"Darkness slowly passed away, and at length the gray of coming dawn began to steal down the chasm."

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